



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Council Members

From: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager

A blue ink signature of Rey Arellano, written in a cursive style.

Date: June 28, 2022

Subject: **Actions in Preparation for Heat Advisory/Excessive Heat Warning**

The purpose of this memo is to provide awareness of the summer heat conditions and describe actions the City has taken in advance to prepare and respond during a heat emergency. If the community were placed under an Excessive Heat Advisory by the National Weather Service, this memo describes the actions the City will take, including the support that will be offered to our community.

Background

The [Summer 2022 Climate Outlook for South-Central Texas](#) provided by the National Weather Service (NWS) calls for an above average summer for heat and drought. This year's first NWS Heat Advisory was issued June 6, 2022, much earlier than usual, and City staff began communicating with the public to prepare for higher temperatures. Five days later, on June 11th and June 12th, the Austin-Travis County region was placed under an Excessive Heat Warning which triggered the opening of overnight cooling centers. An Excessive Heat Warning occurs when the maximum heat index temperature is expected to be equal or greater than 113°F or the air temperature is expected to be equal or greater than 105°F for at least 2 days and overnight air temperatures will not drop below 75°F. As the heat wave continues, City staff will work together with Travis County and community partners to implement the Austin-Travis County Heat Plan in support our community during excessive heat conditions.

Austin-Travis County Heat Plan: Planning & Coordination

The City has reviewed the Austin-Travis County Heat Plan with its partners to ensure everyone is aware of their roles and responsibilities. Our partners include all City and County Departments, Capital Metropolitan Transit Authority, American Red Cross, Austin Disaster Relief Network, AISD and Community Based Organizations.

The Austin-Travis County Heat Plan actions are divided into three phases:

- **Pre-Heat Advisory Phase.** Referred to as the Preparedness Phase and includes city/county departments, community partners, and community agencies carrying out multiple activities to prepare to respond to extreme heat events.
- **Heat Advisory Phase** - Activities focus on increasing surveillance and monitoring of vulnerable populations and the general public. Public information is also shared broadly through the media as well as through communication specifically directed to vulnerable populations through partnerships with existing groups and organizations.
- **Excessive Heat Phase** - Direct action is taken to ensure the health and safety of the population vulnerable to excessive heat. This requires a high-level coordination of activities and resources. Although there is an increase in monitoring activities, most of the activities focus on taking direct action to provide relief to those who are vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. In this phase, additional cooling locations are opened, or hours of operations are extended.

Generally speaking, specific actions taken during particular phases of the heat plan will be dependent on a variety of circumstances. A single day heat advisory will have a different response than a forecasted multi-day or weeklong heat advisory or excessive heat warning. Staff coordinates across departments, agencies, and with partners using HSEM Information Reports (*Attachment A: Sample HSEM Information Report*) and will keep the City Council informed via News Flashes (*Attachment B: News Flashes from June 2022*). Any adjustments to cooling center operations will be included in the News Flashes and up to date information will be maintained on austintexas.gov/alerts. Depending on the situation, HSEM will balance safety and operational efficiency to provide the needed resources to the community.

Monitoring

Austin Public Health is conducting syndromic surveillance and producing a situation report to drive content/information shared with City leadership, Council, partners, providers, and the public. The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) establishes a Situation Assessment team prior to the community reaching excessive heat levels. Once the National Weather Service issues a *heat advisory*, HSEM gathers partners to ensure readiness and discusses any obstacles or unmet needs in anticipation of an *excessive heat warning*. This coordination ensures that the city, county, and community can be ready to have cooling facilities open during the hours of excessive heat and specifically in locations where they will be needed the most.

Outreach

Communication staff from HSEM, APH and EMS coordinate with peer departments and share messaging on social media. Depending on the conditions, this includes messages such as available cooling center locations during the day, recognizing heat illness and actions to take to prevent it, and protecting children, elderly, and pets during hot weather.

HSEM will also post to the Ready Central Texas app and, dependent on conditions, will post to the www.austintexas.gov/alerts page with information translated into the 11 priority languages, including American Sign Language (ASL).

Logistics

Similar to our winter preparedness efforts from earlier this year, the HSEM Logistics Team has prepared Mission Ready Packages (MRP) to support heat emergencies. Prepositioned Shelter MRPs have been reconfigured to support opening of community shelters in the event of a widespread power outage. Cooling Station Supply MRPs have been prepared to aid the opening of cooling locations. Logistics Field personnel are ready to support cooling locations as necessary.

Cooling centers are operated during daylight hours to coincide with peak temperatures. Overnight cooling shelters are dependent upon widespread outages and estimated time of power restoration.

Power Restoration

Austin Energy has crews on standby 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to respond immediately to outages, and most small, routine outages are restored within a short period of time. Lineworkers are well-trained and highly skilled and work to restore power as quickly and safely as possible, no matter the reason for the outage. More information on [how we restore power is available on Austin Energy's website](#).

Support for Medically Vulnerable Populations

Other factors, such as power outages, may complicate extreme heat conditions on an individual level. Localized power outages are caused by a variety of factors, including storms, vehicle collisions, falling tree limbs or vegetation, and animals; and they can happen at any time.

Austin Energy offers a Medically Vulnerable Registry for customers with a long-term disease, ailment or critical illness. Residential customers who are eligible for the registry receive personal case management from the City of Austin and partnering social service agencies. While power outages may still affect a customer on the Medically Vulnerable Registry, under this program, Customer Assistance Program staff works with the registered customer to ensure they have backup plans in case of extended power outages, as well as an emergency contact on file, and have information about resources to get help, if needed.

If additional resources are needed, residents are encouraged to call 2-1-1 to be connected to social service agencies. 2-1-1 is a free, anonymous social service hotline that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and is poised to help with emergency services.

Austin Public Health will continue to expand its partnerships with community-based organizations to help identify and address social services needs as they arise.

Next Steps

City departments collectively continue to incorporate lessons learned from previous emergency events and have improved our response capability. The City is monitoring regional conditions and is prepared to respond to heat emergencies. Please continue to share information with the public and urge them to prepare for all emergency situations.

All residents have the power to protect themselves, their loved ones, and our community in an emergency. The source of that super-power is planning ahead. Preparing for disasters in advance can have a big impact on personal safety and recovery in a crisis. Follow these four steps to get prepared:

1. Make a Plan
2. Build a Kit
3. Know your Neighbors
4. Stay Informed

For more information, visit ReadyCentralTexas.org

If you have any questions or request additional information, please contact Elise Renshaw at elise.renshaw@austintexas.gov.

cc: Anne Morgan, Acting City Manager
CMO Executive Team
Jacqueline Sargent, General Manager, Austin Energy
Juan Ortiz, Director, Homeland Security and Emergency Management
Adrienne Sturup, Director, Austin Public Health
Robert Luckritz, Chief, Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services
Jessica King, Director, Communications and Public Information Office

Attachments:

1. Sample HSEM Information Report
2. News Flashes from June 2022

ATTACHMENT A:

SAMPLE HSEM INFORMATION REPORT



CITY OF AUSTIN OFFICE OF HOMELAND
SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

INFORMATION REPORT

Emergency Pager Number:

512-974-0600

Duty Officer: Louis Gonzales

Dates: June 27th – July 4th

THE INTENT OF THIS REPORT IS TO PROVIDE
REGULAR UPDATES FROM CITY OF AUSTIN
DEPARTMENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS.

LOCAL DISASTER
DECLARATION

1

EOC ACTIVATION

PROVIDING SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

*If you feel that your organization has information that
could be beneficial for other stakeholders, please e-mail
the information [here](#).*

Remember to store your [WebEOC](#) password.
Check [ATXfloods](#) for low water closure status.
Register for emergency notifications at [Warn
Central Texas](#).

Monday, June 27, 2022

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Dry and hot temperatures will continue this week. Cooler temperatures will come into the area early in the week bringing needed showers from the middle to end of the week. Those spending prolonged periods of time outdoors should stay well-hydrated and take plenty of cooling breaks indoors. Public facing city facilities will still be available as cooling stations during normal business hours.

The 4th of July holiday is approaching potentially bringing large crowds for celebration. Guidance and messaging on masking will be public facing as well as measures to ensure safety by utilizing APDs app to alert suspicious activity. [\(LINK\)](#)

The City of Austin is currently in Stage 1 Drought Water Use Restrictions. For more information, follow the [LINK](#).

UPCOMING PUBLIC EVENTS/RELATED ROAD CLOSURES ([ACE Events](#)) ([Downtown](#))

Jul. 04, 2022 – [Willie Nelson's 4th of July Picnic](#)

Jul. 04, 2022 – [HEB Austin Symphony 4th of July Concert & Fireworks](#)

Jul. 12, 2022 – [Austin FC vs Houston](#)

WEATHER FORECAST

([NWS](#)) ([ATXfloods](#))

Mon. – 98/75 Sunny and hot, 60% showers after 4:00PM into the evening. Wind gusts up to 20mph.

Tues. – 94/74 Sunny and Hot, Heat index values as high as 102.

Wed. – 96/74 20% chance of showers.

Thurs. – 92/75 20% chance of showers

Fri. – 92/76 20% chance of showers, wind gusts at 20mph

Sat. – 96/77 20% chance of showers

Sun. – 97/75 Sunny and Hot

AIR QUALITY STATUS ([TCEQ](#))

Then the EPA's Air Quality Index calls for **MODERATE to UNHEALTHY for sensitive groups** Air Quality during the week.

DROUGHT STATUS

Austin Aquifers – Stage II: Alarm Drought ([Local](#))

Travis Co. – Extreme Drought (W) to Abnormally Dry (E) ([State](#))

Williamson Co. – Severe Drought (W) to Moderate Drought (E)

Hays Co. – Extreme Drought (W) to Severe Drought (E)

FIRE RISK

Austin/Travis County has a **MODERATE to HIGH** Fire Danger Rating. ([Link](#))

Currently the Burn Ban is **IN EFFECT** for Travis County. ([State](#)) ([Travis County](#))

ATTACHMENT B:

NEWS FLASHES FROM JUNE 2022

From: [City of Austin Communications](#)
To: [Mayor Adler](#)
Cc: [Cronk, Spencer](#); [Briseno, Veronica](#); [Arellano, Rey](#); [Hayden-Howard, Stephanie](#); [Gonzales, Rodney](#); [Fiandaca, Gina](#); [Morgan, Anne](#); [Sargent, Jacqueline](#); [Van Eenoo, Ed](#); [Alexander, Jason](#); [Ortiz, Juan](#)
Subject: FOLLOW UP: NEWS FLASH: Heat Advisory for Austin and Surrounding Area in Travis County
Date: Friday, June 10, 2022 5:34:59 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, Council Members, and Council Staff –

HSEM is monitoring weather over the weekend and working to staff and open additional facilities. Updates will be posted to austintexas.gov/alerts as new information becomes available. Information is currently available in English. Translations are underway and will be updated as soon as they are available.

Press Releases:

[Austin-Travis County Heat Advisory Continues | AustinTexas.gov](#)
[Austin-Travis County Heat Advisory Issued | AustinTexas.gov](#)

Social to share:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AustinHSEM/posts/381955030635152>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AustinHSEM/status/1535384612922351616>

Where to get updates over the weekend:

Check austintexas.gov/alerts for updates on hours and locations. This page is also being translated in multiple languages.

From: City of Austin Communications
Sent: Monday, June 06, 2022 6:43 PM
To: Mayor Adler <Mayor.Adler@austintexas.gov>
Cc: Cronk, Spencer <Spencer.Cronk@austintexas.gov>; Briseno, Veronica <Veronica.Briseno@austintexas.gov>; Arellano, Rey <rey.arellano@austintexas.gov>; Hayden-Howard, Stephanie <Stephanie.Hayden-Howard@austintexas.gov>; Gonzales, Rodney <Rodney.Gonzales@austintexas.gov>; Fiandaca, Gina <Gina.Fiandaca@austintexas.gov>; Morgan, Anne <Anne.Morgan@austintexas.gov>; Sargent, Jacqueline <Jacqueline.Sargent@austinenergy.com>; Van Eenoo, Ed <Ed.VanEenoo@austintexas.gov>; Alexander, Jason <Jason.Alexander@austintexas.gov>; Ortiz, Juan <Juan.Ortiz@austintexas.gov>
Subject: NEWS FLASH: Heat Advisory for Austin and Surrounding Area in Travis County
Importance: High



The City of Austin News Flash

Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, Council Members, and Council Staff – on behalf of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM):

Today, the National Weather Service placed Austin and the surrounding area in Travis County under a Heat Advisory until this evening which initiates Phase I of our heat plan. This may be repeated on multiple days through the week ahead. This is the first heatwave of the season and the COA, with HSEM as lead agency, is gearing up to support the community now and over the summertime.

This week, forecasted highs are projected to climb from 103 (heat index 108) today and remain above triple digits through Sunday. Temperatures will drop down to 90 and below by sundown, and overnight lows will drop to mid-70s.

HSEM is working in conjunction with Austin Public Health and other partners to encourage their personnel and stakeholders to exercise precautions for the hot weather during this time.

Outreach: The top three local concerns currently are:

- Potential heat-related health impacts
- Potential impacts to vulnerable populations
- Increased risk of wildland and grass fires.

CALL TO ACTION -- Please share the following:

- Social media and message posts below.
 - HSEM Heat Advisory Spanish: [\(2\) Facebook](#)
 - HSEM Heat Advisory English: [\(2\) Facebook](#)
- [Easy energy saving tips](#) and a map where people can [track power outages](#).
- Worker safety regulations about the [Rest Break Ordinance](#) to help keep workers safe in the heat.
- Wildfire safety information:
 - Wildfire risk today is [moderate](#). Pay attention to this site to track fire danger and modify your behavior based on the daily wildfire danger rating.
 - Wildfire is everyone's fight, and what that means is that we need everyone to recognize that we are not in a situation that can avoid future wildfires. Community members can organize their neighborhood into a Firewise Community. Reach out to firewildfire@austintexas.org to start the process of having a wildfire division member assess your home and help organize your community by providing a risk assessment, or visit www.ATXWildfire.org for more information.
 - The Austin-Travis County Wildfire Coalition has published a [Ready, Set, Go! guide](#) (in Spanish as *¡Preparados, Listos, Fuera!*) to help central Texans organize themselves for

evacuation. Plan to be Prepared, prepare to be ready, and when the time comes be ready to go. Remember, Wildfire is Everyone's Fight.

The following message was shared with partners who support people experiencing homelessness:

HEAT ADVISORY! This week's forecast includes multiple days of over 100 degree temps, so now is the time to prepare. Drink plenty of water, take breaks in the shade if you must be outdoors and know where to go if you need to cool off. Austin Public Library locations (except St. Johns) and Austin Recreation and Senior Centers are available to be used as a cooling center during normal business hours.

- All Austin Public Libraries (Except St. Johns)
- All Austin Recreational Centers and Senior Centers (as they have Lobby space)
- Asian American Resource Center - 8401 Cameron Rd, Austin, TX 78754
- George Washington Carver Museum - 1165 Angelina St, Austin, TX 78702
- Dougherty Arts Center- 1110 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX 78704
- Mexican American Cultural Center- 600 River St, Austin, TX 78701

Cooling centers are available during normal business hours (not for overnight services) for getting inside and cool, filling up water bottles, and using restroom facilities. Staying hydrated and cool is imperative to keep our unhoused individuals as safe as possible during these extreme temperatures. Visit @austinlibrary or @austincityparks on social for locations and hours.

Weather Forecast:

Mon. – 103/75	Sunny and Hot, wind gusts up to 25mph
Tues. – 102/75	Sunny and Hot, wind gusts up to 20mph
Wed. – 101/74	Sunny and Hot, wind gusts up to 20mph
Thurs. – 100/76	Sunny and Hot
Fri. – 102/78	Sunny and Hot, wind gusts up to 20mph
Sat. – 102/76	Sunny and Hot
Sun. – 101/75	Sunny and Hot

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Subject: NEWS FLASH: Heat Update for June 22
Date: Wednesday, June 22, 2022 4:39:54 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)



Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, Council Members, and Council Staff –

On behalf of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM):

We continue to experience [record high temperatures in June](#). HSEM is coordinating with City departments, Travis County and community partners. We are monitoring weather conditions with the National Weather Service now and through the weekend, and are prepared to be flexible in our response as weather conditions change.

COOLING CENTER INFO:

Many Austin Public Library locations and Austin Recreation and Senior Centers, and the ARCH are available for use as cooling centers throughout the week during normal business hours (not for overnight services). To find information on locations near you visit the [Austin Parks & Recreation website](#) and the [Austin Public Libraries website](#) for addresses and business hours. Please verify hours before arriving at a location. Currently, only service animals are permissible at these locations. A list of weekend cooling center locations is listed at www.austintexas.gov/alerts.

CALL TO ACTION REMINDERS:

- Updates on cooling center locations can be found at www.austintexas.gov/alerts. This page will be translated in multiple languages and updated with new information as it becomes available.
- Follow @AustinHSEM on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates.
- Share:
 - [Easy energy saving tips](#) and a map where people can [track power outages](#).
 - Worker safety regulations about the [Rest Break Ordinance](#) to help keep workers safe in the heat.
 - Wildfire risk today is [moderate](#). Pay attention to this site to track fire danger and modify your behavior based on the daily wildfire danger rating.

-Communications and Public Information Office